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Neither is the value of Art-study to be measured by the mere amount of positive acquirements which is demanded of its devotees; but by that which makes its chief value—*its power of acting as a general inciter to mental activity and intellectual cultivation.*

But Art is not exhausted by the material and intellectual spheres. The world itself is too narrow to illustrate its entirety; for Art transcends the present and the physical to give us intimations of the future, and glimpses of the supernatural and divine: it *uses* the material, but it *suggests* the spiritual. In its essence it corresponds to the whole nature of man; delighting not only the senses, but informing the intellect, and ministering to his highest spiritual needs. And seeing that Art is but the development or creation of Beauty—its integral parts being symmetry, harmony, and fitness—how directly does a familiarity with its perfectness of aim, lead to the growth of that interior life of Beauty (which is the highest beauty of which we can conceive), the beauty of perfect truth and goodness. For what of symmetry and fitness is there in filling the eye with forms of loveliness; in rearing for our temporary habitations structures upon the purest models; in arraying the person in faultless garments of graceful fold and harmonious hue, while the soul within is the home of tempestuous passions, mean and sordid vices, falseness, disorder, and unrest? Where is the harmony which should exist between the exterior and the interior life, if the beauty of Truth is not the element on which the soul is growing up into a divine symmetry and loveliness? And this we believe to be the true influence of Art, where it is received in its genuineness and wholeness: it permeates the whole nature, promoting not only the proprieties and courtesies of life, but harmonizing the internal nature with its essential conditions of existence; enabling the soul which feels its power, to perceive and maintain its *fitting*, and therefore *true* relations, to all divine and human things.

As our positive knowledge is increased, so, but in more rapid proportion (where the æsthetic instinct is strong) is our taste and imagination; and these ever urge us to attempt to fill up in our own lives, what we find there deficient, and to remodel what is incongruous—not only in the arrangements of our social organisms, but even in Nature herself. We would not be misunderstood; with Nature as a whole we can find no fault, for we are not competent to judge of it, “our human vision being limited to so small a portion at any one time;” but in these little patches and parts of Nature which come directly under our eye, and to a great extent under our control, it is no presumption if we assume to bring them into a nearer accordance with what the imagination can conceive of beauty, and in unison with what the cultivated eye really demands.

It is, then, in this determinate impulse towards a universal development of beauty and harmony, which the love and study of Art, so materially quicken, that we find the highest, as well as the most common and practical benefits

arising from it. And hence, as the genuine love of Art increases, shall we see its influence exerted upon every part of the interior and exterior life—and an earnest seeking, to bring *all things* into a beautiful order and harmony with each other. No less comprehensive than this, is the domain of Art. E. V. S.

PAUL REMBRANDT.

BY ALFRED DES ESSARTS.

(Translated for THE CRAYON, by Miss Harriette Fanning Read.)

I.

IN the year 1606, in the village of Leydendorp, on the banks of the Rhine, lived a miller named Gerretsz: his mill was well known, and, thanks to the river, always active. The poor folks of Leydendorp and Koukerk brought their grain to him, and his reputation extended even to Leyden, which, however, was not very distant. Thus Gerretsz possessed a satisfactory number of bags of ducats, which he counted over at evening with his wife, Cornelia van Suidbroeck. At the supper-hour it was sometimes necessary to go in search of a third person, whom we will designate by his baptismal name—Paul Rembrandt.

“I would bet now,” said the miller, “that scamp is off looking at the willows and reeds. Now, I ask you, wife, what pleasure there can be in staring from root to top at a few old gnarled and twisted trees, and at those reeds, which are good for nothing but to hinder the boats?”

“It is certainly very odd; but I think if he were at work, he would forget the willows and stumps. I wish he were big and strong enough to help you.”

“Wife,” interrupted Gerretsz, “I’ve a plan in my head;” and here, to get up his eloquence, he lighted his pipe. At the same moment the door was opened; a young boy entered somewhat timidly, cap in hand, and seemed to expect a scolding; but the father said, with an encouraging smile, “Well, Rembrandt, here you are at last.”

“Excuse me father, but”—

“Very well, very well; we can talk over the cheese and herrings;” so the household drew up their wooden seats to a downright Dutch supper. Gerretsz kept silence for some time; he was preparing his discourse. At last he began.

“My son, you are getting tall; you are in good health, and it delights me. With good health we can work, and work drives off idle fancies, makes us useful, and brings us wealth. You understand? For my part, the mill thrives; the wheel turns,—money comes; so I can think of you, and the pursuit you should take up.”

Encouraged by this good-natured tone, Rembrandt exclaimed, “Oh, my dear father, don’t trouble yourself about that! I am happy here; our villages are so pretty, and such a little satisfies my eyes—a thicket, a plant, a pond; the canal and its boats, the green meadows, with the cows and sheep—”

“Pshaw, pshaw!” interrupted the miller; “a fine occu-

pation, to be sure! Have I passed my life in honest labor to have my son to waste his in lounging about like a vagabond? No, no; this is child's play. We are talking seriously. I have money; I can give you any profession I like; make you a minister, a lawyer, a magistrate." Here Gerretsz's eyes sparkled with pride, and Cornelia sympathized with him, for maternal love is always ambitious.

"I have spoken about you to the Rabbi Cornelius Sylvius, at Koukerk; a clever man; he will take you into his class. So to-morrow you will begin to learn Latin. Latin! What an honor!"

Rembrandt bowed his obedience; but said nothing. Adieu, then, to his dreamy walks, and contemplations of the country. So, thenceforth he was cooped in a dark and smoky school, where he grew pale over text-books, striving to crowd declensions and conjugations into his head. But whether from inaptitude or inattention, what he learned one day vanished before the next. Yet, whenever Rembrandt could seize a pencil, he drew everything that came in his way, beginning with the long face and furred bonnet of the Rabbi, who threatened to send him back to his mill; the boy desired nothing better.

One day a painter from Leyden, named Swanenburg, came to consult Master Cornelius Sylvius. "I have a son," he said, "whom I wish to pursue the fine arts; he desires nothing but to become a doctor. Your reputation leads me to hope that you will take charge of his education."

"We can make an exchange," replied the pedagogue, "for I have a pupil who hates Latin, and cares for nothing but drawing; and if his designs had common sense—if they were fine heads of Apollo or Jupiter—but mills, and trees, and beasts—it is contemptible! Here are some of them."

Swanenburg examined the sketches. "I will make the exchange willingly," he said.

II.

At this epoch, that is in the 17th century, painting was in high repute in the Low Countries: it was the era of Rubens and Van Dyck, with their hosts of pupils. Fine pictures never wanted purchasers, and Gerretsz could calculate that the ducats were the same whether earned under the cap of a doctor of laws, or with palette in hand. Swanenburg approved, and the miller said to himself that the painter of Leyden ought to know. What was his surprise, when, six months after, Swanenburg said to him, "My dear friend, you must find another master for your son."

"Eh! What? Has he been as lazy with you as with Master Cornelius?"

"By no means; he is in his proper element, and profits greatly by it. All the models I could give him he has copied with surprising fidelity and rapidity: his aptness in imitation is prodigious, and I own frankly I can teach him nothing more."

The miller raised his hands in thanksgiving to God. "But where can I send him?" he next asked.

"I have thought of that, and I have written to Peter Lastman, who consents to take your son."

So Rembrandt became the pupil of Lastman; and by assiduous labor soon mastered the style of his teacher, to the latter's great astonishment. But though independent and eccentric in character, Rembrandt respected Lastman, and while conscious of his own superiority, never evinced it by an unsuitable word. At the end of two years Lastman went to Gerretsz, as Swanenburg had done.

"I can teach your son no more; he would lose his time with me, and I should not honestly earn the money you pay me."

The miller stood confounded. "My dear wife," he exclaimed, "our boy will be one of the first men in Holland!"

"His country will not be ashamed of him," answered Lastman. "If you will take my advice, you will place him with Jacob Pinas, the only person I know who can perfect his great talent."

And Rembrandt became the pupil of Jacob Pinas, where, in six months he had learned all the professor could teach. He must, therefore, work at his side as an equal, which would have wounded the dignity of Pinas, or leave him. He chose the latter, and walked back to Leyden-dorp. At sight of him, there was an exclamation of joy and astonishment. Gerretsz, despite the pleasure of seeing his only son, felt a little uneasy; but Cornelia divined the cause of his return.

"Three!" said the miller. "And what will you do now, you unlucky boy?"

"Here are the mill, the meadow, and the river!"

"Yes, for millers, peasants, and boatmen."

"And for painters, too: nature belongs more to them than to any one. Be easy, I have my models here."

"But what will you do with your works?"

"I do not know: God will inspire me. Leave me to test myself with his creations. I was stifled in those work-rooms, where rich citizens and gay ladies came, I never had elbow-room; where I could not wear my old coat, nor smoke my pipe. And then the copying of *antiques*, Italian engravings from Raphael! They are not the things for a good Hollander. Thank Heaven, I'm at home!"

III.

By dawn next morning Rembrandt resumed his old peregrinations, but no longer without aim, as in his childhood. Pencil in hand, he scrutinized the least effects of light, and watched the play of the sunbeams from their rising until their orb disappeared amid the purple and gold of the west. The slightest details of a landscape, the simplest incidents of rustic life, afforded matter for the young artist's study: thus he found the secret of a method entirely his own, and to this peculiar manner of lighting a part of his objects, and leaving the rest in mysterious shadow, he owes his originality.

Meanwhile, Gerretsz was anxious to see this talent practically employed. He sent secretly to Swanenburg to dine

at the mill ; the good man accepted the invitation cordially, and Gerretsz laid his perplexities before him.

"I should not complain if my son did anything useful ; but he is all the time busy with what he calls his *studies*, and has finished but one picture since his return. I want you to tell me if it has any merit."

The painting was produced ; Gerretsz and his wife felt their hearts beat violently while Swanenburg examined it ; but before he had given his opinion, Rembrandt entered, and perceiving the state of the case, exclaimed, with vexation, "Why would you show this wretched attempt, my father?"

"Attempt!" repeated Swanenburg. "See here; I will write a note to Clement de Jonge, a rich dealer in medals at La Haye: you will take your picture with my letter, and on your return tell me how he receives you."

"Indeed, master, I dare not."

"Dare, my lad. You will have the best of recommendations—your painting."

* * * * *

Clement Jonge was in his shop: Rembrandt entered resolutely, determined to maintain his independence, and to ask nothing of the merchant.

"What do you want, friend?" asked the latter, looking askance at the peasant youth.

"I have brought you a letter, sir, from my first master in painting, Swanenburg."

"Your master! Are you a painter?"

"I think so; or if not, I hope to become one."

"You have time enough before you. But let me have the letter."

He threw a rapid glance over it, and said, carelessly, "Where is this painting?" Rembrandt gave him the canvas, and the merchant's face was at once lighted with enthusiasm. "Your name is Rembrandt?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, well; you will be talked of; and when that time comes do not forget that I bought your first picture."

"You will buy it? Is it possible?" exclaimed the young man, in ecstasy.

"Certainly, cash down; a hundred florins."

"I must be dreaming!"

"You will earn many more. Keep at work; you are in the right path."

IV.

Up to this time Rembrandt, devoted entirely to the sublime face of Nature, had never been thrown into contact with society and its temptations. The hundred florins of Clement de Jonge had awakened a new passion in his heart; the love of gain. He became avaricious. His, however, was not the avarice which narrows the mind, renders it suspicious, and reduces it to ignoble habits: he could not be vulgar, even in avarice. Persuaded of the merit of his works, he wanted a great price for them; but he never hurried them: he resolved never to part with a picture until he was satisfied with it, and he kept his

resolve. He would give whole days to small details, to drapery, or dressing of the hair. Finding that Leyden, or even Leyden, was not a sufficient sphere, he left the paternal mill, and established himself in Amsterdam. This was in 1630; he was then twenty-two years of age. His fame had preceded him there, and thenceforward his life was a series of triumphs, and always of indefatigable toil. No artist employed his time more carefully, since, independent of his historical paintings, landscapes, and portraits, to so great a number, he left six hundred and eighty-seven pictures in water-colors. His love of gain, undoubtedly, contributed to this fertility; but we repeat that, to the honor of Rembrandt, it never lessened the perfection of his works.

The study of Rembrandt was like a strange, isolated world, and is reflected in his works: a mysterious light reigned over it. There the artist, coarsely clad—for he cared nothing for personal luxury—gratified himself by collecting the oddest treasures: there hung a crowd of Oriental costumes, turbans, and obsolete weapons. This *mania* for heaping up such old things was often criticised by the eminent persons among his friends, as Renier Anslar, the physician Faustus, Ephraim Bonus, a Jewish doctor, and Abraham de France, a great dealer in prints. Rembrandt answered, "These are my *antiques*." He prided himself on never imitating the Roman or Florentine masters, and on never having brought his inspirations under their rules. These abrupt remarks were uttered as frequently before strangers as to his pupils. One day that there was a circle around him, whilst he was painting his "Christ upon the Cross," Rembrandt was more than usually earnest in urging the merits of his own method. "You see, gentlemen," he said, "I have been particular in gathering around the spectacle of the divine suffering the wretches who always rush where blood is flowing; but I throw them into the shade: the shade is necessary to that crowd so eager to gaze on the martyrdom. You will observe the grief of the Virgin, of Magdalene, and St. John, although those three faces are in *semi-tint*. The Italians, now, would have thrown a brilliant sunlight over this scene of mourning, and modelled the suffering Christ like an Antinous; but I have no patience with this false display. I have not been to Italy."

Here a gentleman of a very elegant appearance, hitherto unobserved, saluted the painter with great courtesy, and said: "That is readily seen."

Rembrandt turned fiercely round on the speaker: "Who are you, that speak to me in such a manner?"

"My name is Van Dyck, sir; at your service."

"I esteem you very highly, sir," returned Rembrandt, raising his cap slightly, "but, at the same time, you must permit me to remain a Hollander, and to express my aversion towards Italy."

V.

The village of Ransdorp, in the province of Wuterland, was in great delight; for there Paul Rembrandt, the

famous artist, was celebrating his marriage with a simple peasant girl, Maria Dorothea, and if youth and beauty are the best of dowers, the bride was surely rich, though without the shadow of wealth. But Rembrandt, always consistent, wanted a wife who would not trammel him with the conventionalities of town life.

"I thought you would have chosen a fortune," said his father.

"Yes, I like money, but in a way of my own, from the point of my brush. Besides, I have a treasure in Maria."

"In virtues?"

"Yes; and also an admirable model, whom I can arrange as I like for all my compositions. And then it is desirable to have beauty always before our eyes. So I make a good bargain; and my marriage will be the best answer to those who ridicule what they call my avarice. Just think of the trick my pupils played me lately; they cut some bits of pasteboard round, painted them like gold pieces, and scattered them on the floor of my study. On entering the room, and seeing this shower of gold, I stooped quickly"—

"To pick up paper."

"Precisely. The rogues laughed like crazy creatures; and I laughed with them; but when I take my pretty housekeeper to Amsterdam, I shall give them a famous lesson in criticism."

The result showed Rembrandt in the right. His wife, as economical as himself, never contradicted him, and agreed with him in everything. Several years after she proved this by aiding him in a trick, which, if not very delicate, was certainly original, for the purpose of doubling his fortune, and ascertaining the real value the public affixed to his works. One morning the study of Rembrandt remained closed: people wondered, and inquired why. Maria received her visitors in mourning, and her face expressed great affliction.

"What has happened? Is Rembrandt sick?"

"Rembrandt is dead! He died on a journey; the terrible news has just reached me!"

Their servant, and even their son Titus—whom Rembrandt had more than once sent to sell his engravings to amateurs, under the pretence that he had stolen them, that they might thus bring a higher price—played parts in this farce. Nothing was talked of in Amsterdam but this irreparable loss. *Connoisseurs* hastened, troubled lest they should arrive too late to procure one of his master-pieces, henceforth limited in number.

"What a genius!" cried the burgomaster Six, his best friend; "we should be troubled to enumerate his *chefs-d'œuvre*. For my part, I think there is nothing finer than his 'Resurrection of Lazarus,' 'Christ Driving the Money-Changeers from the Temple,' 'The Night-Watch,' and the 'Lesson in Anatomy.' And his portraits! Nature itself! Now is the time to prove our devotion to his memory. The sale is about to begin; do not let strangers carry off these works; they ought to remain in the country."

The good man's eloquence was effective, and the sale produced most magnificent proceeds. Concealed in the next room, Rembrandt witnessed all, and enjoyed the pleasant results of his stratagem. But in a few days Maria resumed her usual dress.

"What! You drop your mourning so soon?" she was asked.

"Thank Heaven, I may well do so! I have heard good news. My husband is not dead."

"Not dead!" This report, too, ran like wildfire through Amsterdam, and if any suspected the trick, they excused it for its originality.

But in 1669 the rumor became a reality. Rembrandt died at the age of sixty-one. Many historians have erred in saying that he left a large fortune. Mr. Frederick Villot has rectified many of those traditional errors, and gives us the facts concerning the close of Rembrandt's life.

"The truth is," he writes, "that Rembrandt, after earning considerable sums, died in the utmost poverty; ruined by his passion for engravings, pictures, and curiosities of Art. His house, his medals of Mark Antony, his bronzes, arms, objects of natural history, the whole magnificent collection, the catalogue of which has been handed down to us, was inventoried the 15th and 16th of July, 1666, and sold at two different times by Haring, junior, the public appraiser, whose portrait Rembrandt had taken. Then, deprived of all resource, he retired upon the Canal of Roses, one of the poorest parts of Amsterdam, where he passed the rest of his life in great obscurity, but still working, as we find by a portrait dated the year of his death; and the funeral of the great man, to whom statues are now raised, was provided by public charity, at a cost of fifteen florins! We are indebted for these details to Mr. Scheltema, who has charge of the archives of Amsterdam, and who sends us further this extract from the burial register at Westerkerk, or the Western Church: '8th Oct., 1669, Rembrandt (Van Ryn), on the Canal of Roses, 15 florins.'

"Rembrandt left a son, Titus, who was his father's pupil, but who died at the age of twenty-seven, without having produced any remarkable works."

PICTURES.—A room with pictures in it, and a room without pictures, differ by nearly as much as a room with windows—and a room without windows. Nothing, we think, is more melancholy, particularly to a person who has to pass much time in his room, than blank walls, and nothing on them; for pictures are loop-holes of escape to the human soul, leading it to other scenes and other spheres. It is such an inexpressible relief to a person engaged in writing, or even reading, on looking up, not to have his line of vision chopped square off by an odious white wall, but to find his soul escaping, as it were, through the frame of an exquisite picture, to other beautiful, and perhaps, idyllic scenes, where the fancy for a moment, may revel, refreshed and delighted. Is it winter in your world?—perhaps it is summer in the picture; what a charming momentary change and contrast! And thus pictures are consolers of loneliness; they are a relief to the jaded mind; they are windows to the imprisoned thought; they are books; they are histories and sermons—which can be read without the trouble of turning over the leaves.—*N. Hampshire Patriot*.